New steel plants

684. SHRI IQBAL SINGH: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that nearly 25 new steel plants all in the category of one million tonnes and above capacity are expected to come up in the country within the next five years;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the reasons for not setting up a Mini Steel Plant in the State of Punjab in private sector under the liberalisation policy;

(d) the steps being taken by Government to invite the proposals to set up a Mini Steel Plant in the State in private sector; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) As per information available, 4 new steel plants of capacity more than 1 million tonnes per annum are expected to come up within the next 5 years.

(b) These are as below:—

	Million Tonnes per annum
(i) M/s. Essar Gujarat Ltd.	– 2.0
(ii) M/s. Nippon Denro Ispat Ltd.	– 1.2
(iii) M/s. Jindal Vijayanagar Steel	– 1.6
(iv) viz. M/s. MESCO Kalinga Steel Ltd.	– 2.4

(c) to (e) The iron and steel industry has been exempted from the purview of compulsory licensing. An entrepreneur wishing to set up an Iron or steel unit does not require approval of Government for industrial licence unless the plant is proposed to be located within 25 kms. from the periphery of the standard urban area limits of a city having a population of more than 10 lakhs as per 1991 Census.

Assessment and Utility of Ground Water

685. SHRI RAHASBIHARI BARIK: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) the total ground water in the country according to the last assessment made in that regard;

(b) the percentage out of that which has been harnessed in each State;

(c) whether Government have any proposal to pay more attention to increase irrigation facility through ground water reservoirs; and

(d) if so, the steps taken in that direction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI P.V. RANGAYYA NAIDU): (a) As per the assessment made by the Central Ground Water Borad in 1995, the total annual replenishable ground water resources of the country have been estimated as 48.18 million hectare metre per year.

(b) A statement giving State-wise position of ground water resources availability and the percentage of its development is enclosed (*see* below).

(c) and (d) The development of ground water resources is done by the State Governments. The Central Ground Water Board has, however, prepared a Centrally Sponsored Scheme for investigation and development of ground water resources in eastern States which is presently in consultation stage with appraising agencies.